DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 387 778 CS 012 268

AUTHOR Abromitis, Barbara
TITLE Effectiveness and Creativity in the Resource Role. Literacy Report No. 23.
INSTITUTION Northern Illinois Univ., DeKalb. Curriculum and Instruction Reading Clinic.
PUB DATE Nov 95
NOTE 12p.
AVAILABLE FROM Northern Illinois University, The Reading Clinic-119 Graham Hall, DeKalb, IL 60114 ($3.50, postage included).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Creative Teaching; Elementary Secondary Education; Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; Methods; *Resource Teachers; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS *Covey (Stephen R)

ABSTRACT

Resource teachers fulfill special responsibilities and roles in a school. As teachers, they must commit themselves to a wide group of students; as resource specialists, they must make a commitment to the staff and administration. Both commitments call for an effective style of leadership, knowledge, and service that, in order to make a difference, must extend beyond the ordinary. "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen R. Covey is an excellent source of inspiration and practical suggestions for those who wish to make an impact in their role as resource specialist. In it, Covey details seven habits that bridge the private and public domains and focuses on changes that an individual can make within his or her areas of control. The habits are: (1) proactivity--recognizing the responsibility to make things happen; (2) begin with the end in mind--developing a personal mission statement that includes goals for all roles (mother, wife, teacher, homemaker, daughter); (3) put things first--taking charge of a life and making things happen; (4) think win/win--effective people work from a win/win perspective; (5) understand and then be understood--learning to listen and reflect on both the content and emotion of other people's feelings; (6) synergies--appreciating the combined energies and talents of other people; and (7) sharpening the saw--weekly renewal in the form of exercise and eating well. (An annotated bibliography of additional sources on effectiveness is appended.) (TB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 387 778

Northern Illinois University

Literacy Report No. 23

EFFECTIVENESS AND CREATIVITY IN THE RESOURCE ROLE

Barbara Abromitis

November 1995

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
N. A. Stahl
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Literacy Research and Reports

Curriculum and Instruction
Reading Clinic—119 Graham
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

CS013268

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Literacy Report No. 23

EFFECTIVENESS AND CREATIVITY IN THE RESOURCE ROLE

Barbara Abromitis

November 1995

Northern Illinois University
Reading Clinic—119 Graham
DeKalb, Illinois 60115
815-753-1416

Effectiveness and Creativity in the Resource Role

Resource teachers fulfill special responsibilities and roles in a school. As teachers, they must commit themselves to a wide group of students; as resource specialists, they must make a commitment to the staff and administration. Both commitments call for an effective style of leadership, knowledge, and service that, in order to make a difference, must extend beyond the ordinary.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989) by Stephen R. Covey is an excellent source of inspiration and practical suggestions for those who wish to make an impact in their role as resource specialist. In it, Covey details seven habits that bridge the private and public domains and focuses on changes that an individual can make within his/her "Circle of Influence"—the areas within him/herself over which there is control. Implementation of each of the habits requires thought and commitment, and as with anything, change may not come easily. However, the goal of effectiveness at work and at home and the means of putting into practice a more balanced lifestyle while still meeting increased obligations bears closer inspection.

Habit One: Proactivity. Covey begins with the first habit necessary for change and impact—proactivity. He describes this as 'recognizing our responsibility to make things happen." How? By "using R and I—resourcefulness and initiative." The author, however, makes one important distinction between proactivity and positive thinking. When individuals are proactive, they face reality squarely and do not deny the negative features of a situation. However, proactive people also accept that they have the power to choose a positive reaction to that situation. From this power comes one's Circle of Influence—that which one can control. Proactive people focus their efforts on their Circle of Concern—that which they wish to change.

Habit Two: Begin with the End in Mind. The second habit is based on the principle that all things are created twice—first as a mental picture and then as a reality. Covey likens the habit to the building of a house, where every detail is thought out before construction begins. In application, this habit involves developing a personal mission statement that includes goals for every role (mother, wife, teacher,

homemaker, daughter, etc.). For a resource specialist, it might mean developing a mission statement for the program and thinking about the variety of "hats" to be worn throughout the day.

The mission statement itself serves a valuable purpose. By focusing on the destination or results, an individual may keep daily circumstances in perspective. In the resource role, this may be especially pertinent as one deals with individual teacher concerns, budgets, administrative responsibilities, parents, and students. As Covey puts it, "We may be very busy, we may be very efficient, but we will also be truly effective only when we begin with the end in mind" (p. 98).

Habit Three: Put First Things First. This habit is the practical fulfillment of the first two, which encourage individuals to take charge of their lives and then to imagine the end result. Habit Three is the physical creation of the imagined reality from Habit Two.

Covey discusses a time management matrix that cross-matches activities that are urgent or not urgent (in relation to time) and important and not important. He explains that effective people spend most of their time and effort on activities that are important but not urgent—in other words, in the realms of prevention, relationships, new opportunities, planning, and recreation. He stresses that most people react to urgent matters; proactive people take the initiative on matters that are important and will influence their mission. Finally, effective people stay completely away from matters that are unimportant.

These first three habits represent the "personal victory" that comes with effective management of the individual. The next three habits involve interdependence, or how the effective person works and lives with others.

Habit Four: Think Win/Win. In all interdependent situations (between co-workers, families, spouses, friends, etc.), most negotiations end in one of six ways: Win/Win, Win/Lose, Lose/Win, Lose/Lose, Win or Win/Win, or No Deal. Covey details the weaknesses that are inherent in four of these options—suggesting that effective people operate from a Win/Win perspective (or at the very least, Win/Win or No Deal). Win/Win is the third alternative, the better way. Covey distinguishes this

alternative from the compromise which implies a lesser solution. Instead, Win/Win means pooling energies to develop an innovative, "higher" way.

In the resource role, thinking Win/Win would be very advantageous. Because most specialists deal with parents, students, administrators, teachers, and other support staff—and often must negotiate program changes, schedules, and lesson plans—a Win/Win attitude would ensure meeting everyone's needs and pursuing creative solutions.

Habit Five: Understand. . .Then Be Understood. This may be the most important habit to acquire. Covey describes Habit Five as empathetic listening, where one listens and reflects both the content and the emotion or feeling behind the words. By taking the time to understand another person's perspective completely, an individual builds the trust and openness that is necessary for real communication and problem-solving to occur.

Resource specialists need to master this technique to move beyond the appearance of "expert" and into the realm of those they seek to help. As Covey states, "When you can present your own ideas clearly, specifically, visually, and most important, contextually—in the context of a deep understanding of [others'] paradigms and concerns—you significantly increase the credibility of your ideas" (p. 257).

Habit Six: Synergies. Synergy is the catalytic, empowering, and unifying energy that occurs when a group of people have truly joined forces to solve a problem or to create something new. It includes an appreciation of the diverse talents and experiences that people have; as Covey says, "Good! You see it differently! Help me see what you see!" (p. 278).

In most school districts, teachers and other staff members are often asked to participate in site-based management. In theory, site-based management should be synergistic—the combining of all the strengths of the staff to create a school that is uniquely their own. If this does not occur, it is important to step back and take the time to truly understand where each staff member is coming from (Habit Five) and then proceed to brainstorm innovative solutions.

The last habit is one of renewal. It helps ensure the energy and continued commitment to being an effective person.

Habit Seven: Sharpen the Saw. Habit Seven involves the person preserving and enhancing him or herself in four domains. Covey suggests that weekly renewal in the physical realm includes exercise, nutrition, and stress management. Through this effort, an individual is able to feel well and function in a consistent manner. Renewal in the mental realm includes reading, visualizing, planning, and writing. These activities sharpen the mind and keep an individual well-informed and in a thoughtful mode.

Spiritual renewal is also essential and may include value clarification and commitment, study, and meditation. Activities in this realm allow an individual to draw upon his/her inner strength repeatedly. Finally, social/emotional renewal includes service, empathy, synergy, and intrinsic security. Being of service to others and taking the time to understand them allows individuals to step outside themselves to view the world from a different perspective. A better understanding and appreciation of their own situation often results.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People is a practical guide to developing the habits described above. It offers application suggestions at the end of each chapter and many short examples that illustrate how each habit may impact the personal and public lives of an individual. Each of these habits is an important one for someone in the resource role to develop.

Reference

Covey, S. (1989). The seven habits of highly effective people. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Annoted Bibliography of Additional Sources

On Effectiveness

Kiersy, D., & Bates, M. (1978). Please understand me: Character and temperament types. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nesis Books.

This book offers readers a new way to look at themselves and at others—through their character type. Described as "different drums" (Ch.1), the types are celebrated and detailed in relation to spouses, children, and co-workers. The types are made up of different combinations of the following characteristics: extroverted or introverted, intuitive or sensory, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceptive. The insight they offer into what makes an individual unique is an important reminder that in a leadership role (such as parent, teacher, or specialist), one cannot seek to change those around them, but may only better understand them in order to effect change in outside situations.

Kohn, A. (1993). Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold starts, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

This book offers a compelling case for doing away with many of the incentive programs that operate in today's schools. Kohn describes many scenarios where extrinsic motivation actually replaced original intrinsic motivation (such as in a read-for-pizza program) and how this type of motivation is actually detrimental to the desired result. He also explains that these incentives are a part of adult life, too, and may take the form of site-based management (the "reward" for professional educators) that is actually nothing more than lip-service to the same top-down decision-making model. While many educators could present counter-arguments to some of Kohn's points, his premise is interesting and bears consideration as one moves into a resource role.

Langer, E. (1989). Mindfulness. New York: Addison-Wesley.

This book begins with a description of mindless behavior: Going through the motions and doing things the way they have always been done without regard to changes in the situation itself. Langer offers

scenarios from private and professional life and then contrasts this behavior with mindfulness. Mindfulness draws upon all the resources of the mind. Mindful people welcome new information, think about process before outcome, concentrate, create, and innovate. One chapter describes the effects of mindfulness on aging and another details its effects on the workplace. For the resource specialist, especially one moving into a school with a traditional or more tenured staff, this book would be helpful in providing an impetus for thinking about situations in a new context and for arriving at solutions that go beyond the traditional.

LITERACY RESEARCH AND REPORTS ORDER FORM

		No. of Copies
No. 11	Socio-Educational Influences on Standardized Reading Tests, 1900-1991 [ED 335 662] by Peggy VanLeirsburg	_____
No. 12	Assessment Literacy: Perceptions of Preservice and Inservice Teachers Regarding Ethical Considerations of Standardized Testing Procedures [ED 341 666] by Peggy VanLeirsburg & Jerry L. Johns	_____
No. 13	Differences in the Written Recalls of Folktales Among Above-Average, Average, and Below-Average Second-Grade Readers [ED 346 442] by June E. Barnhart	_____
No. 14	Pre-School, Kindergarten, and First-Grade Inventive Spellers' Treatment of Onsets and Rimes by Donald J. Richgels, Lea M. McGee, & Jeanne M. Burns	_____
No. 15	What Teachers Have Been Telling Us About Literacy Portfolios [ED 348 657] by Jerry L. Johns & Peggy VanLeirsburg	_____
No. 16	From Traditional Reading Clinics to Weliness Centers [ED 349 544] by Jerry L. Johns	_____
No. 17	Literacy Development in Preschool and Kindergarten Children: Patterns Between Groups and Across Tasks by Donald J. Richgels & June E. Barnhart	_____
No. 18	Teachers As Readers by Peggy VanLeirsburg & Jerry L. Johns	_____
No. 19	The Role of Metacognition in Reading Comprehension: Implications for Instruction by Barbara Abromitis	_____
No. 20	Reading Workshop by Janet M. Wills	_____
No. 21	Effective Phonics Instruction by Jackie Easley	_____
No. 22	Multicultural Education by Karen Gersten	_____

No. of Copies

No. 23 Effectiveness and Creativity in the Resource Role
by Barbara Abromitis _____

Each report costs $3.50 (postage included). Actual postage costs will be added for large orders or overseas shipments. Please remit in U.S. funds. Please make check or money order payable to the NIU Reading Clinic and send to: Northern Illinois University, The Reading Clinic-119 Graham Hall, DeKalb, IL 60115.

Ship to:

Name _____

Address _____ Amount Enclosed

_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ $_____

Country _____

☐ Place me on your mailing list

An ED number is given in square brackets following the citation for some reports. For approximately 98% of the ERIC documents, the full text can be found in the ERIC microfiche collection. This collection is available in over 800 libraries across the country. Alternatively, you may prefer to order your own copy of the document from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). You can contact EDRS by writing to 7420 Fullerton Road, Suite 110, Springfield, VA 22153-2852, or by telephoning them at (800) 443-ERIC (3742) or (703) 440-1400.